

# ***CHALLENGE***

A NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH PROGRAM



## ***Annual Report 2001***



## PREFACE

Five out of every 100 young adults enrolled in high school leave without successfully completing a high school program. That's over 2,700 youth that dropout of school every school day before acquiring the skills and personal traits and maturity necessary to find meaningful employment. Moreover, these youth are 60% more likely to become involved with the legal system than those who complete their secondary education. Thirty-three percent of the crime committed by youth under 18 years old are homicides, robberies, sexual assaults, aggravated assaults, and simple assaults.

To combat this loss of human potential and the accompanying social and economic cost to communities across the nation, Congress enacted legislation authorizing the National Guard to conduct the ChalleNGe program. Why the Guard? The rationale was simple. The National Guard is "Hometown America" with deep roots in every community. Its strong community ties make the National Guard a highly visible and effective entity in many cities, towns and communities across the United States. The men and women of the Guard in their civilian lives are committed, involved, and influential across the spectrum of business, education, and government. They are role models worthy of imitation by any young person who may have lost or is seeking to find his /her life compass. National Guard Units across the country have traditionally been involved in youth programs designed to help young people become positive and productive members of their community.

This Congressionally mandated report provides an independent assessment of program implementation and ongoing operational processes. It documents program outcomes and impacts from July 2000 through August 2001. The report is prepared by Social Consultants International, Inc.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Ms Patricia Antosh and the evaluation team (Dr Stephen Powers, Ms Lynda Mann, Ms Barbara Poole, Mr. Robert Richter) who spent many long hours visiting ChalleNGe sites, collecting qualitative and quantitative data, and documenting operational processes. We are particularly grateful for the tireless efforts of the technical support team - Mr. Sunil Shrestha, Ms Fida Suleiman, Mr. Alex LI and Ms Mary Ramos, who did the behind the scene work in research, data compilation, statistical analysis and technical design. Their work formed the basis for the outcome measures and impact assessment.

Special thanks to the directors and staff of the ChalleNGe programs across the country. Through their dedication and commitment, young high school dropouts are receiving a second chance, a real opportunity, to become productive citizens in America's future.



# ChalleNGe States, Governors and Adjutants General

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Alaska	Tony Knowles	MG (AK) Phillip E. Oates
Arizona	Jane Dee Hull	MG (AZ) David P. Rataczak
Arkansas	Mike Huckabee	MG Don C. Morrow
California	Gray Davis	MG (CA) Paul D. Monroe, Jr.
District of Columbia	Anthony Williams (Mayor)	MG Warren L. Freeman
Georgia	Roy Barnes	MG David B. Poythress
Hawaii	Benjamin J. Cayetano	MG Edward L. Correa, Jr.
Illinois	George H. Ryan	MG (IL) David C. Harris
Kentucky	Paul E. Patton	BG Dean A. Youngman
Louisiana	M.J. "Mike" Foster	MG Bennett C. Landreaneau
Maryland	Parris N. Glendening	MG (Ret) James F. Fretterd
Michigan	John Engler	MG E. Gordon Stump
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CHALLENGE STATES, GOVERNORS  
AND  
ADJUTANTS GENERAL



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# Definition of Terms

## A

**Adjutant General:** The senior officer of the National Guard organizations in each state and territory.

**Applied:** Youth that have submitted completed applications for acceptance into a ChalleNGe Program.

## B

**Baseline Survey:** An instrument designed to measure attitudinal changes.

**Budgeted Cost:** The dollar amount obligated to the ChalleNGe Program based on the target enrollment for a given fiscal year.

## C

**Cadre:** Members of the staff that provide primary supervision of ChalleNGe participants and are responsible for administering the military-based training and discipline programs at the ChalleNGe sites.

**Case Manager:** Staff members either paid or in volunteer status,

who monitor the Post-Residential activities of Corpsmembers and their mentors.

**ChalleNGe Counselor:** Staff member responsible for providing guidance counseling services to ChalleNGe participants.

**ChalleNGe Instructor:** Staff member or contracted individual who provide the academic instruction necessary to prepare the ChalleNGe participants for successful completion of the Academic Excellence core component.

**CHAMEIS:** Acronym for the ChalleNGe Monitoring and Evaluation Information System- the data collection and warehousing system developed specifically for the ChalleNGe Program.

**Class:** The seventeen-month program that consists of a 22-week Residential Phase, the first two weeks of which are referred to as Pre-ChalleNGe, and a twelve-month Post-Residential Phase.

**Core Components:** The eight areas in the intervention model that define the curriculum for the ChalleNGe Program: Leadership/Followership; Job Skills; Responsible Citizenship; Community Service; Health and Hygiene; Life Coping Skills; Academic Excellence and Physical Fitness.



**Corpsmembers:** Young men and women accepted into and participating in the National Guard ChalleNGe Program.

## D

**Discipline:** An enforced, fair, and consistent system of rewards and punishment

**Drug Free Policy:** ChalleNGe policy on substance abuse: ChalleNGe is a drug free program. All youth are required to submit to and pass a drug test as a condition for admissions to ChalleNGe. Once admitted they are subject to periodic testing throughout the Residential Phase.

## E

**Enrolled:** Youth participating in the Residential Phase following successful completion of Pre-ChalleNGe.

## G

**General Educational Development (GED)**

**Test:** A series of tests developed by the American Council on Education that enable persons who have not graduated from high school to demonstrate the attainment of

developed abilities normally acquired through high school completion.

**Graduate:** A ChalleNGe participant who meets the standards for the eight core components and successfully completes the 22-week Residential Phase.

## H

**High School Dropout:** A youth who is not attending or enrolled in, and has not graduated from a secondary school and does not have a GED or other alternative high school equivalency recognition approved by the state.

## I

**Initial Enrollment:** The number of youth who enter the first day of the ChalleNGe Residential Phase following successful completion of Pre-ChalleNGe.

## L

**Living Allowance:** An amount up to \$15.00 per week for expenses that will be provided to Corpsmembers during the



## M

**Mentors:** Volunteers who have passed a background screening and have completed the NGB approved mentor-training program.

## P

**Post-Residential Action Plan:** The template used to assist Corpsmembers to develop career goals and short-term and long-term objectives.

**Placement:** An activity the Corpsmember engages in upon graduation that supports their Post-Residential Action Plan.

**Post-Residential Phase:** The twelve-month period following graduation from the Residential Phase.

**Pre-ChalleNGe:** The first two weeks of the Residential Phase in which applicants are assessed to determine their potential for successfully completing the program.

## Q

**QUAD:** Primary ChalleNGe staff responsible for the holistic growth of the Corpsmember. The QUAD includes the Cadre, Counselor, Instructor and Mentor Coordinator sections.

**Quasi-Military Environment:** The military-based structure, education, training and discipline that characterize activities of the ChalleNGe Program.

## S

**State Plan:** An implementation plan that identifies operational goals, objectives and tasks for the state's ChalleNGe Program.

**Stipend:** An amount up to \$2,200 that may be paid to successful graduates of the Residential Phase.

## O

**Outcome-based Evaluation:** A process that reports on the total impact of a program.



## T

**TABE** (Tests of Adult Basic Education):

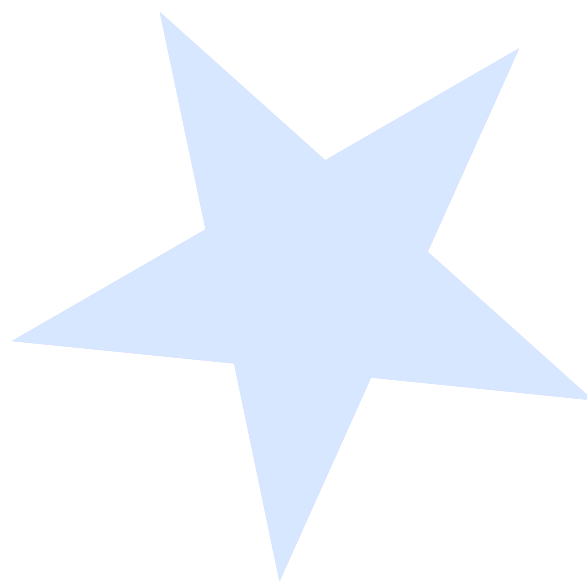
A series of testing instruments used to identify individual educational levels in various academic subject areas such as Mathematics, Reading, Language, Comprehension and Science. The results of a TABE test indicate the grade level equivalent that the test taker has achieved. For example, a reading TABE score of 7.4 indicates that the test taker is reading at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade 4<sup>th</sup> month level.

**Target Enrollment:** The maximum number of students funded annually in a Program's budget.

## U

**Unemployed:** Not regularly employed.

**Under employed:** Working either part-time or full-time for less than minimum wage.





# Executive Summary

The National Guard ChalleNGe Program (ChalleNGe ) is a youth intervention program designed for young men and women, ages 16-18, who have dropped out of school. The program provides military-based training, education, and supervised work experience in community service and conservation projects, to improve the life skills and employment potential of these dropouts.

This report presented by Social Consultants International, Inc. (SCI), addresses activities and outcomes at the 27 ChalleNGe programs located in 24 states and Puerto Rico between October 2000 and September 2001.

While this report covers most of fiscal year 2001 (FY-01), funding used to support these activities was appropriated in fiscal year 2000. FY-01 appropriated funds will be executed in fiscal year 2002. This time interval between appropriations and operations is necessary to accommodate the differences in State and Federal fiscal years, differences in the convening times of State Legislators and to allow for Cooperative Agreement negotiations between the National Guard Bureau (NGB) and each state.

Goals and objectives of the program are stated as performance objectives with performance indicators that are consistent with the requirements and standards identified in the Government Performance and Results Act (1993). Data are analyzed, evaluated and reported on annually to determine the progress of ChalleNGe Program participants toward meeting the goals and objectives of the program.

ChalleNGe is a 17-month program with two distinct phases: a 22-week Residential Phase and a 12-month non-residential phase. Admission into the program requires the participants, referred to as Corpsmembers, be volunteers 16 through 18 years of age, not in trouble with the law, drug free, unemployed and high school dropouts.

The intervention model that provides the framework and direction for the implementation of the ChalleNGe program consists of eight core components: academic excellence, responsible citizenship, physical fitness, community service, job skills, leadership/followership, life coping skills and health and hygiene. These functional areas are the essence of the Residential Phase of the program.



Fundamental to the Post-Residential Phase is an active mentoring program. Program graduates and mentors maintain weekly contact throughout the program.

Major findings for this report are provided below. In-depth analyses, along with charts and graphs depicting results, are presented within the report along with a series of recommendations.

### **Program Administration**

- 16,445 qualified youth applied for admission to ChalleNGe.
- The program was funded for 41% (6,724) of those who applied.
- 6,457 Corpsmembers graduated from the program.
- ChalleNGe graduated 96% of the targeted number upon which funding was based.
- Within 30 days of completing the Residential Phase 48% of the graduates were enrolled in continuing education, joined the military or obtained employment.
- At completion of the Post-Residential Phase, 77% of the graduates placed: of the 77%, 21% were in continuing education, 22% joined the military, 31% obtained employment and 3% were engaged in miscellaneous activities.
- Cost per graduate totaled \$15,609.

### **Academic Accomplishments**

- Corpsmembers achieved an average 1.5 grade equivalency gain in reading during the Residential Phase.
- Corpsmembers achieved an average 1.8 grade equivalency gain in mathematics



during the Residential Phase.

- 64% of eligible graduates received a GED and 1% received a high school diploma and an additional 4% returned to high school.

### **Community Service**

- Corpsmembers performed an average of 81 hours of community service during the Residential Phase with a total value of \$2,694,954.<sup>1</sup>

### **Physical Fitness**

- 100 % of the graduates showed improvement in physical fitness, all who were eligible received awards.

### **Mentors**

- 90% of the graduates were formally matched with mentors.

These data indicate the goals of the National Guard ChalleNGe program continue to be met. More than 6,400 high school dropouts were impacted by ChalleNGe programs. Improved math and reading skills were evidenced, especially with 64% of eligible Corpsmembers graduating from ChalleNGe with their high school equivalency certificate through GED testing. This GED attainment rate is slightly higher than the national average for this population.

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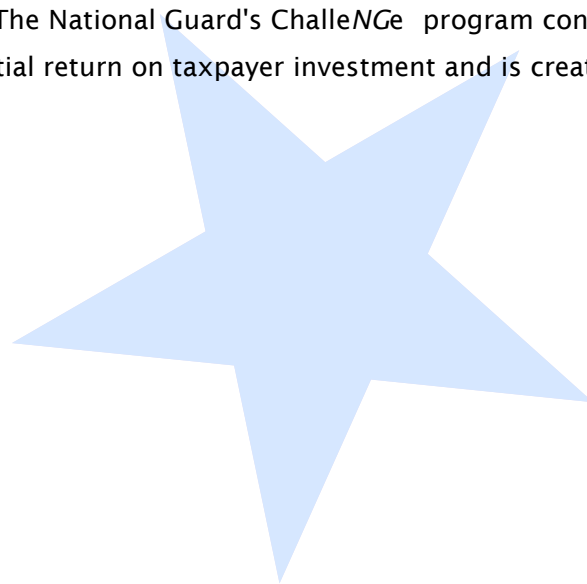
<sup>1</sup> Based on the federal minimum wage of \$5.15.



Community service and conservation projects undertaken by the Corpsmembers provided them with not only valuable work experience but also with an appreciation for the need and impact of community involvement. With an estimated value at more than two-and-a-half million dollars, these projects left an indelible mark on local neighborhoods and communities.

Corpsmembers learned life-coping skills and decision-making skills not developed early in adolescence. Many youth came to ChalleNGe from troubled backgrounds, accompanied with behavioral problems, early sexual involvement, learning disabilities, family issues, drug use, gang involvement or juvenile arrests. They had no idea what the future held for them. By graduation though, nearly all (98%) of Corpsmembers had developed a clear Post-Residential Action Plan, with goals and objectives. Having experienced success at ChalleNGe, they were then ready to re-enter society equipped with improved knowledge, skills and abilities to deal more effectively with the ongoing challenges of life.

ChalleNGe is a National Guard community-based program that leads, trains and mentors at-risk youth so that they may become productive citizens in America's future. At a cost of \$15,609 per graduate, ChalleNGe continues to be one of the most cost-effective youth intervention programs in the Nation. The National Guard's ChalleNGe program continues to attain results that reflect a substantial return on taxpayer investment and is creating a better America, one youth at a time.



# Chapter 1: THE SITUATION

## Background

In 1999, more than 500,000 students dropped out of high school. More than two-thirds of high school dropouts were aged 15 through 18, and nearly half of the dropouts were age 15 through 17, according to the National Center for Education Statistics in their Common Core of Data 2000.<sup>2</sup>

The economic implications for high school dropouts are substantial. In 2000, 16 to 19 year old males (14%) and females (12%) were reported as the largest unemployed group by the Department of Labor. The average annual earnings in 2000 for adults without a high school diploma was \$18,720 per year compared to \$26,312 for high school graduates and \$46,592 for college graduates.<sup>3</sup>

The report further states that youth from families with incomes in the lowest 20 percent of all family incomes were five times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers from families in the top 20 percent of the income distribution.

The Office of Correctional Education, U.S. Department of Education reports, “approximately 49% of the prison population have not completed high school or a GED, compared with approximately 24% of the general population.”

Correctional studies indicate that although literacy or higher education levels do not necessarily guarantee positive lifestyles outside of prison, illiteracy is a factor in higher recidivism rates. Estimates indicate that over 50% of offenders released from institutions each year will return within three years.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) *Statistical Briefing Book* reports that nearly 106,000 juveniles were held in a residential facility on a typical day.

According to the American Youth Policy Forum, intervention and prevention actions are the most effective means of “stopping most young people from becoming adult criminals”.

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<sup>2</sup> NCES: Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Report on American Workforce*.





## Addressing the Situation

Recognizing the long-term social and economic impacts of youth not completing high school, Congress enacted legislation in 1993 for the conduct of ChalleNGe. This National Guard run program provides education and training in a military-like disciplined environment for high school dropouts. Since its inception in 1993, ChalleNGe has grown from sites in ten states to 27 sites in 24 states and Puerto Rico and graduated over 31,000 youth from the program.

The ChalleNGe mission is to intervene in the lives of at-risk youth ages 16 through 18 and produce program graduates with the values, skills, education and self-discipline to succeed as adults.

The ChalleNGe intervention model consists of eight core components, as shown in Figure 1, and is used to foster the holistic growth in terms of mind, body and personal values. This preventive rather than remedial model uses an integrated curriculum that addresses



**Figure 1. The Eight Core Components**

problems not symptoms, with the emphasis on self-discipline, self-esteem, education and the development of healthy life styles and a positive work ethic.

Section 509 of Title 32, *United States Code*, provides the authority for the Secretary of Defense to use the National Guard to conduct the ChalleNGe program. Cooperative Agreements are entered into between the National Guard Bureau and the Governor of each participating state. Under these agreements, the respective Governors, through the Adjutants General, establish, organize, and administer the National Guard ChalleNGe program in their state. FY-98 Congressional legislation authorized the ChalleNGe program



on a permanent basis and required states to provide a portion of the funding for the program. During this reporting period, the contribution ratio is 65% for Federal and 35% for State funds.

### Eligibility Standards

Youth must volunteer and be motivated for acceptance into a ChalleNGe program. They cannot be ordered by the court or judicial system to participate, nor can they be referred for enrollment in the ChalleNGe program in lieu of sentencing for any offense.

Applicants are required to meet eligibility criteria specified in the cooperative agreement established between the state and NGB. Each state ChalleNGe program has the flexibility to develop its own selection processes and procedures. These are published in a document entitled State Plan, which must have the approval of the Governor.

Program applicants must meet the following minimum criteria for admission. Corpsmembers must be:

- *16 to 18 years of age and enter the program prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.*
- *Volunteer*
- *Drug free*
- *A high school dropout/expellee,*
- *A citizen or legal resident of the United States and resident of the state in which the program is operated,*
- *Unemployed or underemployed, and*
- *Not currently on parole or probation for anything other than juvenile status offenses, and must not be serving time or awaiting sentencing, nor under indictment or charges, nor convicted of a felony or capital offense.*



It is important to note that youth that have been charged with an offense that has not yet been resolved through the judicial system and those that have convictions for felonies are not eligible for entry into the ChalleNGe program.

### ChalleNGe Program Phases

ChalleNGe is coeducational and consists of a five-month Residential Phase and a one-year Post-Residential Phase. The Residential Phase which includes the 2-weeks Pre-ChalleNGe Phase, is conducted in a quasi-military structured and disciplined environment. In the Post-Residential Phase, the graduates return to their communities where they have been matched with a mentor who will assist and support them as they set out to achieve the goals and objectives they identified during the Residential Phase. A model of this is shown in Figure 2.

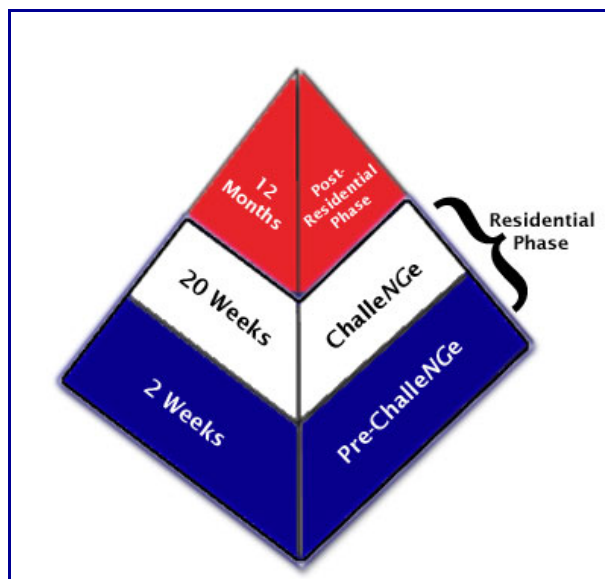


Figure 2. Program Phases



### The Residential Phase

The first two weeks of ChalleNGe are referred to as the Pre-ChalleNGe Phase. During this time applicants are assessed to determine their potential for successfully completing the program. This initial phase allows applicants the opportunity to adjust to the physical, mental and social discipline requirements of the program. The focus is on teamwork, close order drill, code of conduct, leadership and followership practicums and physical training. Applicants who successfully complete this Pre-ChalleNGe Phase earn the distinction of becoming full-fledged Corpsmembers.

The Residential Phase focuses on basic lifestyle changes approached through a rigorous program of education, training and community service. During this phase, Corpsmembers focus on eight core components that develop the whole person in terms of mind, body and personal values. Emphasis is on self-development, self-esteem, education and the development of healthy lifestyles. Corpsmembers explore career opportunities, begin to identify personal goals and objectives and develop Post-Residential Action Plans, personal roadmaps for success after graduation from this phase.

### The Post-Residential Phase

Mentoring is a critical part of the ChalleNGe program. For many youth, having a relationship with a caring adult who is a consistent and positive role model will make the difference between success and failure. During the Residential Phase, Corpsmembers are introduced to the concept of mentoring. Corpsmembers and potential mentors undergo mentor training, followed by a formal ceremony where each Corpsmember and mentor are matched. This ceremony symbolizes the commitment that will continue for a period of one year following graduation.

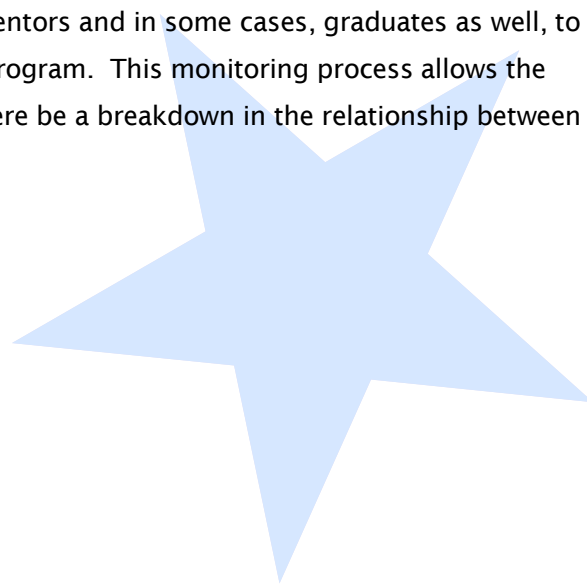


Corpsmembers and their mentors are required to maintain weekly contact with each other for the duration of the program. During the Residential Phase, these contacts can be via mail, e-mail, telephone and/or face to face. Oftentimes, Corpsmembers and mentors participate in a community service project together to strengthen the relationship during this period.

The Post-Residential Phase is designed to provide graduates of the Residential Phase with on-going support from a mentor during the succeeding 12 months. In this phase, the role of the mentor becomes critical. They function as advocates and facilitators for graduates faced with transitioning from the structured and disciplined environment of ChalleNGe to a world in which they face choices that test self-discipline and self-motivation. Mentors provide support to graduates as they work to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Post-Residential Action Plans developed during the Residential Phase.

During the Post-Residential Phase, Corpsmembers are required to have a minimum of four contacts per month with their mentor, two of which must be face-to-face contacts. ChalleNGe programs closely monitor graduate activities during this phase.

A formal follow-up process requires mentors and in some cases, graduates as well, to send monthly reports back to the ChalleNGe program. This monitoring process allows the ChalleNGe staff to intervene quickly should there be a breakdown in the relationship between mentor and graduate.





### Annual Target Enrollment

Each ChalleNGe state annually identifies the maximum number of participants targeted for graduation (Figure 3). This number is based on available federal and state funds, facilities and the number of high school dropouts in the state. ChalleNGe programs use historical attrition rates from their Residential Phases to determine the size of the incoming class in order to meet the program's target number of graduates. The map at Figure 4 visually shows the program's national coverage.

STATE	PROGRAM SITE	TARGET ENROLLMENT
ALASKA	Ft. Richardson	200
ARIZONA	Mesa	224
ARKANSAS	Camp Robinson	200
CALIFORNIA	Camp San Luis Obispo	200
GEORGIA	Ft. Gordon	200
GEORGIA	Ft. Stewart	400
HAWAII	Kalaeloa	200
ILLINOIS	Rantoul	800
KENTUCKY	Ft. Knox	200
LOUISIANA	Camp Beauregard	350
LOUISIANA	Gillis Long Facility	350
MARYLAND	Aberdeen Proving Ground	200
MICHIGAN	Battle Creek	200
MISSISSIPPI	Camp Shelby	400
MISSOURI	Camp Clark	200
MONTANA	Dillon	200
NEW JERSEY	Ft. Dix	200
NEW YORK	Camp Smith	200
NORTH CAROLINA	Clinton	200
OKLAHOMA	Pryor	200
OREGON	Bend	200
PUERTO RICO	Ft. Allen	200
SOUTH CAROLINA	Columbia	200
TEXAS	Galveston	200
VIRGINIA	Camp Pendleton	200
WISCONSIN	Ft. McCoy	200
WEST VIRGINIA	Camp Dawson	200

Figure 3: Annual Target Enrollments This Reporting Period.



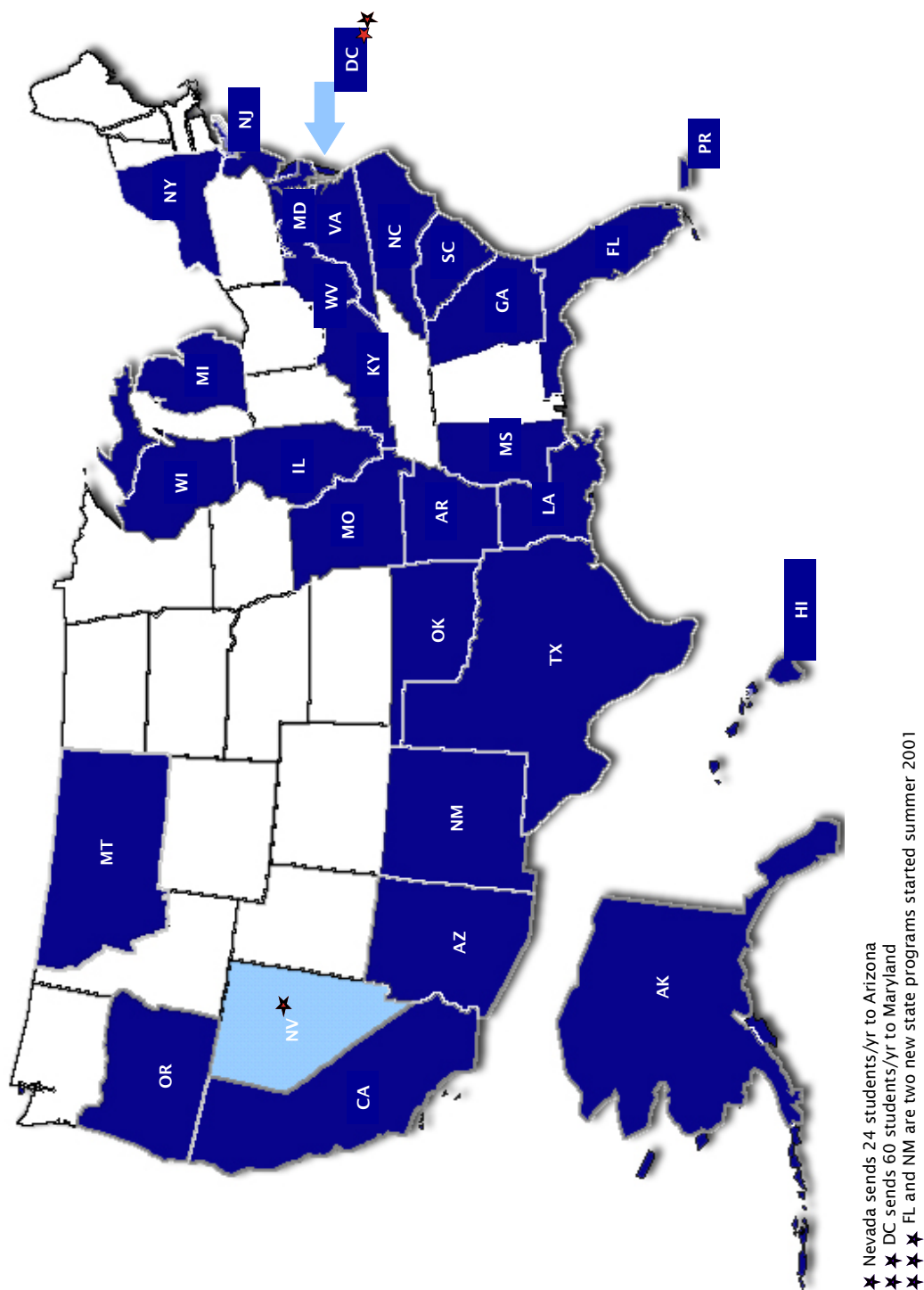


Figure 4: ChallengeNGe States



## Methodology

This evaluation addresses whether the life skills and employment potential of 16 to 18 year-old high school dropout can be significantly improved through military-based training and education. The findings, conclusions and recommendations herein are based on quantitative and qualitative data collected from the 27 ChalleNGe program sites. Historical, statistical and empirical data gathered during site visits and personal and telephonic interviews are referenced. The primary concentration of the analyses references data collected during the 2001-reporting year.

Data for this evaluation were compiled from reports transmitted from each of the ChalleNGe program sites that included weekly statistics on Residential Phase activities and monthly statistics on Post-Residential activities. Data from surveys completed by mentors and graduates are also included. SCI evaluators conducted visits to each site to observe program implementation and to interview participants, staff, mentors and parents.

Multivariate, statistical analyses are used to measure the efficiency of the program's components to determine the significance of the relationship between these components and program outcomes and impacts. Standard analytical techniques are used to determine the degree to which the program goals and objectives are achieved. Data are presented in a descriptive, graphic or pictorial manner that is reflective of the numbers, percentages, or factual data analyses concerning the core components, mentors, Corpsmembers, placements and operations. Conclusions reported herein are derived from statistical and empirical data. The data are tested to ensure all assumptions of the parametric tests are met. Unless otherwise noted, all statistical tests are performed using a 95% confidence level.



# Chapter 2: FINDINGS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

## Profile of a ChalleNGe Participant

"Yeah, my name is Gary. What of it? I'm 16. Nope, I'm not in school. Dropped out. Two years of boredom was enough for me. Never went to class anyway. I was flunking everything. Drugs? Yeah, I did them. A blunt helped me make it through the day. Arrested? Well, yeah. Not for anything major. Possession, once. My family? I live with my dad but me and him don't get along. He said he's gonna throw me out if I don't get a job. Says I am worthless."

The profile of ChalleNGe participants has changed little over the years. The typical ChalleNGe Corpsmember is a 16-year-old white male who dropped out of high school after two years. He has used illegal drugs, perhaps not frequently, and had some minor dealings with the juvenile justice system. He has held a variety of minimum wage jobs, never staying employed long enough to develop marketable skills. He wants to find a lucrative job but has learned he needs his high school diploma or his GED first. He has been told by his parents, his probation officer, and other adults that he needs discipline and structure in his life. He has a friend who graduated from ChalleNGe. His friend got his GED while at ChalleNGe and 'got his head together' while he was there. And that's what our Corpsmember now wants.

ChalleNGe attracted and enrolled a younger youth population this year. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the Corpsmembers starting in the program this year were age 16. Last year, only 40% of the youth were 16 years old when they started. Figure 5 depicts this shift in age.

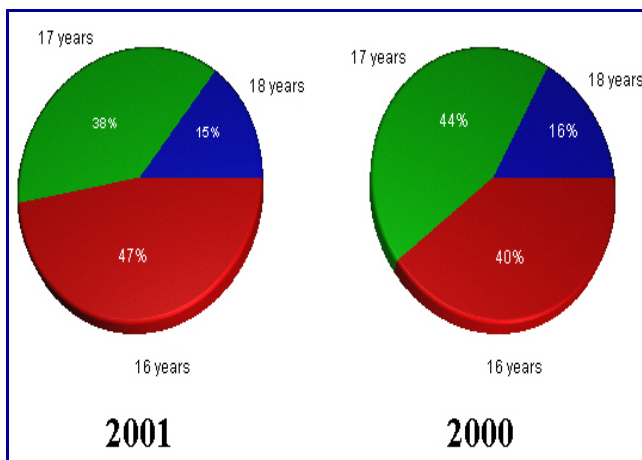


Figure 5. Age at Entry into ChalleNGe



As shown in Figure 6, upon entrance into the program, more than half of the participants (55%) indicated their primary reason for applying to the ChalleNGe program was to obtain a GED. More than 75% of the respondents report being out of high school for a year or less prior to attending the ChalleNGe program as shown in Figure 7.

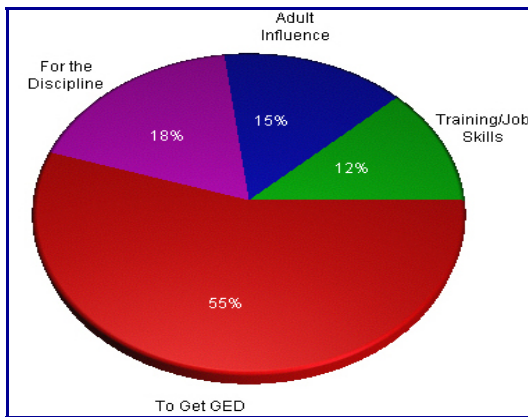


Figure 6. Reasons for Entering ChalleNGe

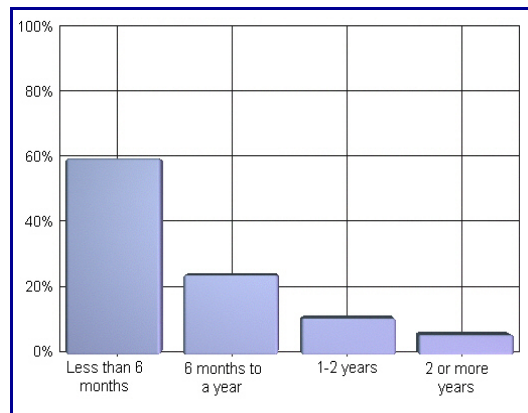


Figure 7. Time Out of School

Two thirds (67%) of the participants reported some prior involvement with the juvenile justice system. A review of student admission files during site visits revealed cases of youth accepted into the program that had offenses such as assault, burglary and possession of illegal drugs. While these may be classified as felony offenses, they are being interpreted by the program as acceptable “juvenile status offenses”. Program directors have acknowledged the existence of varying interpretations of this term and have turned to State Staff Judges Advocate for guidance.

In most cases, youth applied for admission into ChalleNGe based on referrals by graduates of the program. However, probation officers and other law enforcement personnel were primary sources of applicant referrals in several states.





Many participants acknowledged their desire to develop self-discipline as another motivating factor for entry into the program. This information was corroborated in interviews conducted with Corpsmembers during evaluation site visits and in telephone interviews. Written surveys completed by graduates two and three years after program completion also confirmed this fact.

Analysis of survey data indicates that most of the ChalleNGe participants (95%) lived with either one or both parents or guardians prior to entering the program. As shown in Figure 8, only 5% reported living on their own prior to applying to and entering the ChalleNGe program.

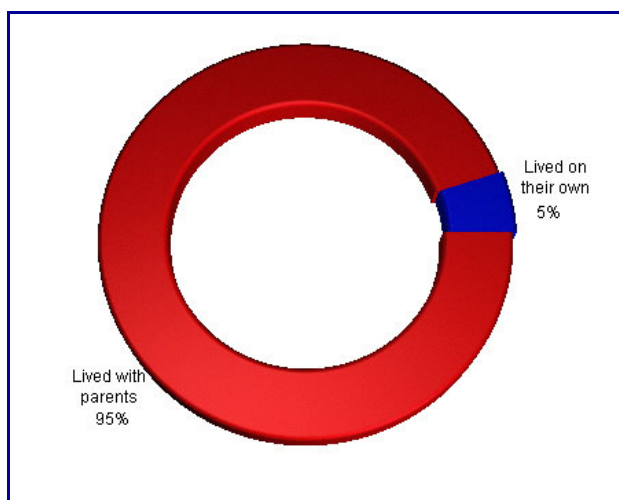


Figure 8. Residences at Time of Entry

A total of 16,445 youth applied for admission to ChalleNGe this reporting year, Classes 15 and 16. Of these, 10,541 were brought into Pre-ChalleNGe. Nearly eight thousand (8,226) were then accepted into the program. The student enrollment represented a cross section of races and ethnic origins.

The National Center for Education Statistics reports the high school drop out rate to be nearly evenly split for males and female, with 51% males and 49% females. However, ChalleNGe has consistently attracted and enrolled males at a significantly higher rate than females. The gender makeup of ChalleNGe participants has remained at 81% male and 19% female for each class.

During this reporting period, ChalleNGe graduated 96% of the target number funded. A total of 6,457 young ChalleNGe adults representing a cross-section of races and ethnic origins graduated from the program. Figure 9 displays the gender and race/ethnic backgrounds of these youth.

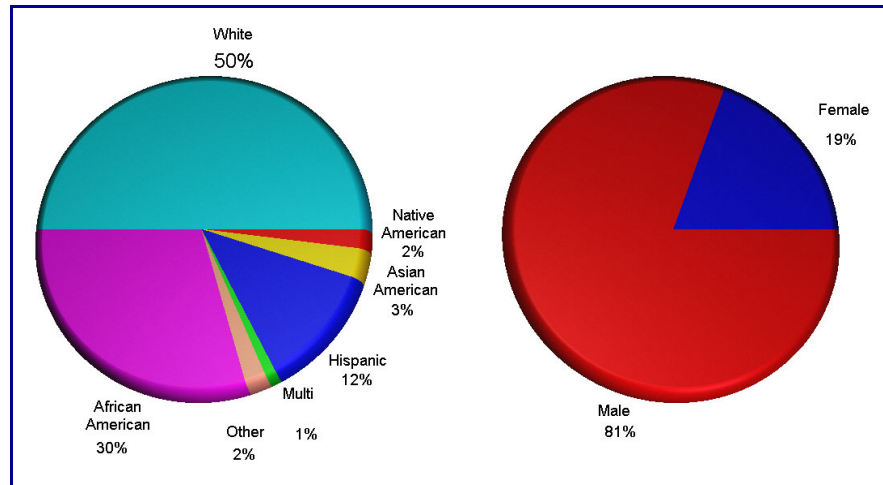


Figure 9. Graduates by Gender and Ethnicity

### ChalleNGe Program Mentors

ChalleNGe program applicants are asked to identify at least one potential mentor<sup>4</sup> when submitting their applications. Those unable to identify mentor prospects are assigned a mentor recruited by the ChalleNGe staff. Prospective mentors are defined as caring adult volunteers who will serve as positive role models for the Corpsmembers. The mentors and Corpsmembers agree to establish and maintain a relationship that begins with the matching ceremony in the Residential Phase and formally concludes at the completion of the Post-Residential Phase. Prospective mentors are required to submit to a criminal background screening, participate in an interview with the program mentor coordinator, and complete mentor training approved by NGB prior to being selected and matched with a Corpsmember.

Many programs now have successfully combined mentor training and the matching process into an event called “Mentor Day”. Usually taking place during week 13 of the Residential Phase, Mentor Day starts with training provided to the mentors in the

<sup>4</sup> Many programs now require applicants to submit a minimum of two names of potential mentors with their applications and in several states it is a condition for acceptance

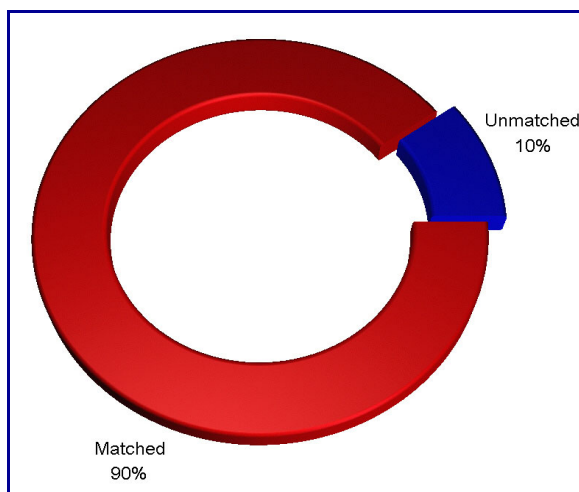


morning. Corpsmembers and mentors then meet as a group for a formal matching ceremony the duration of the program. Oftentimes there is also an exchange of pins, tokens or small gifts intended to serve as constant reminders of this agreement.

Following the matching of the Corpsmembers with their mentors, there exists a requirement to maintain weekly contact either by phone or by mail for the duration of both the Residential Phase and the Post-Residential Phase. During the Post-Residential Phase, both parties must conduct a minimum of two face-to-face contacts per month.

Ninety percent (90%) of the graduates of Residential Phases during this reporting period were matched with mentors prior to graduation (Figure 10). Shortfalls in assigning and matching mentors prior to graduation are primarily due to the failure of the program to secure a criminal background check on the mentor

prospect. Less frequently, Corpsmembers fail to identify prospective mentors at the time they submit their applications for ChalleNGe. ChalleNGe staff was then faced with the task of locating prospective mentors for these Corpsmembers.



**Figure 10. Mentor Matches**

Interviews were conducted with mentors from the 1999 and 2000 classes. Data from these interviews revealed the following:

- ❖ 100% said the ChalleNGe program provided them with mentor training opportunities.



- ❖ 98% said they participated in the mentor training provided by the ChalleNGe program.
- ❖ 95% reported ChalleNGe provided them with the resources they needed as a mentor.
- ❖ Mentors reported an average of two meetings with Corpsmembers per month.
- ❖ 57% stated they sent monthly reports to the ChalleNGe program on a regular basis.

Mentors offered the following recommendations for improving mentoring:

- ❖ Establish open communication and on-going information exchange between the ChalleNGe program site and mentors,
- ❖ Establish consistent support for mentors during the Post-Residential Phase,
- ❖ Facilitate meetings with mentors and Corpsmembers before and after graduation,
- ❖ Provide expanded information on the goals and Post-Residential Action Plans developed by the Corpsmembers during the Residential Phase.

Increasing and/or shifting resources to support effective Post-Residential Phase case management can accomplish most of these recommendations. National Guard Bureau has recently modified the ChalleNGe Manning Model to allow for part-time Case Managers to work with mentors and monitor graduates' activities during the Post-Residential Phase.



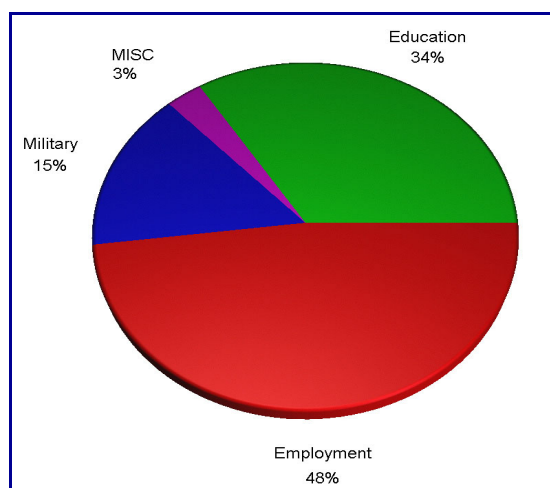
## Placement of Corpsmembers

During the Residential Phase, Corpsmembers are required to develop Post-Residential Action Plans that outline the goals and objectives they wish to accomplish following graduation. As part of the process, Corpsmembers identify a primary placement goal in education, employment, or the military.

Site visits revealed each Corpsmember had developed an action plan. But upon closer review, many plans appeared to lack the realistic goals and objectives necessary for them to be viable and achievable. In some cases, Corpsmembers listed short-term career goals that were impossible to achieve within the 17 months of the program. In other instances, Corpsmembers identified realistic goals but neglected to complete the plan with the intermediate steps necessary for goal realization.

Forty-eight percent of the graduates and/or their mentors reported placement activities that began within 30 days of graduation.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 11 shows the categories of these placements. Most graduates had been successful in securing employment (48%), followed by continuing education (34%) and entering the military (15%). Three percent (3%) were homemakers, caregivers or doing volunteer work. Of note, less than 1% had been reported as being incarcerated.



**Figure 11. Placements of Graduates**

<sup>5</sup> States with full-time paid case managers provided higher placement statistics due to their ability to closely monitor monthly reporting requirements



A total of 5,987 graduates completed the Post-Residential Phases this year. Reports indicate more than three-fourths (77%) were placed. These placements are shown in Figure 12.

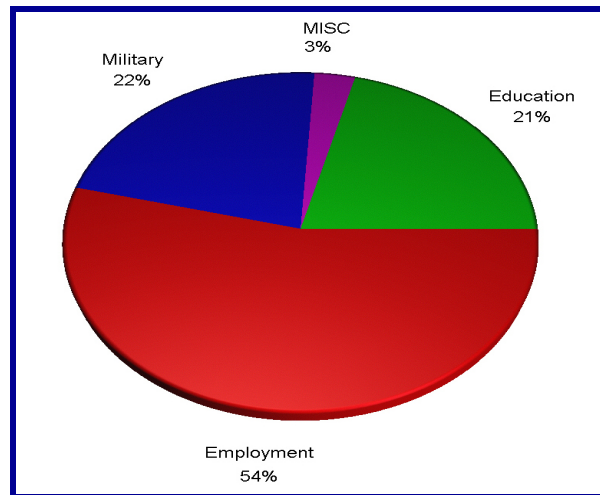
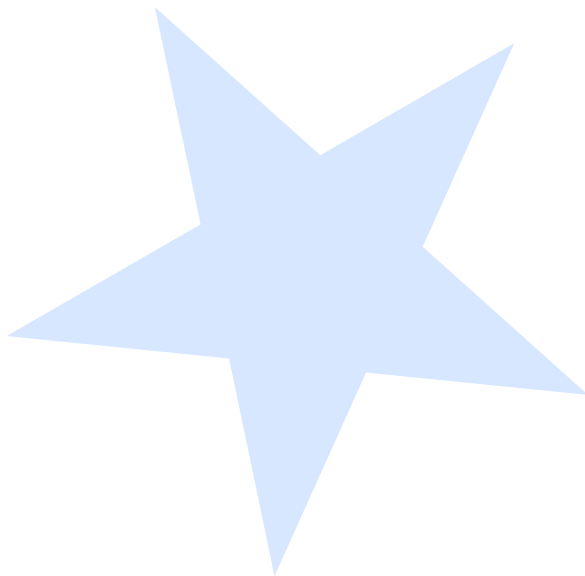


Figure 12. Placements at Completion

On-going contact between the mentor and the graduate appears to play a significant role in placement. The data shows that more than three-fourths (79%) of the graduates who maintained active monthly contact were placed. Only 47% of those who didn't maintained frequent contact reported placement.



# The Core Components



# Academic Excellence

Goal: Increase reading and mathematics grade levels, attain a GED or high school diploma, and pursue higher education.



## Performance Objectives

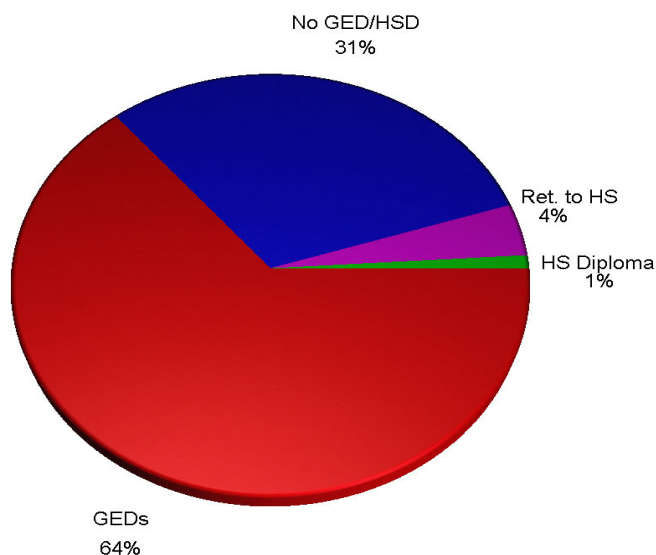
All Corpsmembers will:

- Demonstrate Academic improvement and return to high school, or
- Demonstrate academic improvement and attain a GED or high school diploma, and
- Demonstrate grade level improvement in math and reading as measured by performance on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).



## Findings

- 64% of eligible graduates passed the GED
- 2% above national percentages for same age group
- 4% of graduates returned to high school
- 1% received a high school diploma
- Average equivalency growth in mathematics— 1.8 grade levels in TABE (see TABE definition)
- Average equivalency growth in reading —1.5 grade levels in TABE (see TABE definition)



**Figure 13. Academic Achievement**

Note: The 64% GED achievement is 2% higher than the national average for this age group.





# Community Service

## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will:

- Plan a community service activity.
- Complete a minimum of 40 hours in community service or conservation projects
- Experience the intrinsic value of giving back to the community



## Findings

- 107,791 conservation project hours completed
- 487,627 community service hours completed
- 25,655 self-help hours at local Chal-leNGe sites.
- 81 average hours completed per graduate
- \$2,694,954 estimated value to Chal-leNGe communities based on minimum wage of \$5.15/hr.

Goal: Give back to the community by performing a minimum of 40-hours of community service.

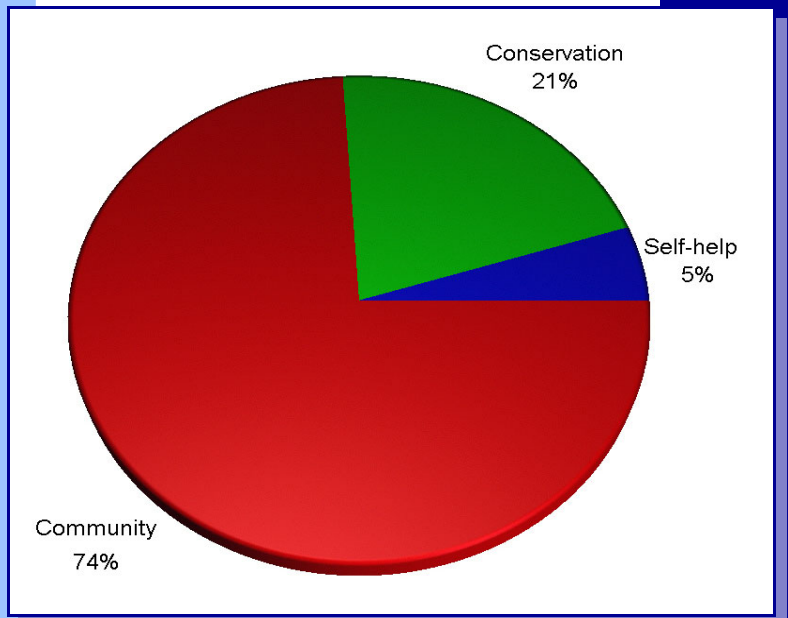


Figure 14. Community Service



# Health & Hygiene

Goal: Understand nutrition basics, substance abuse awareness and personal relationships.



## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will:

- Adhere to drug free eligibility standard.
- Participate in instruction that leads to understanding of:
  - Proper nutrition
  - Sexually transmitted diseases
  - Personal Sexual values
  - Holistic approach to wellness.

## Findings



- Drug tests are administered as a condition for admission to the program.
- Random drug testing is conducted during each class.
- Classes are conducted on personal sexual values, sexually transmitted diseases and healthy lifestyles.
- Nutritionally balanced meals are served in dining facilities.



# Physical Fitness

Goal: Improve personal fitness, exercise for everyday living and intramural sports.

## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will:

- Participate in a daily physical fitness program
- Earn a President's Council on Physical Fitness award or a ChalleNGe National Guard Program Physical Fitness Award.

## Findings

- Physical fitness training scheduled and conducted daily.
- 100% of the graduates demonstrated improvement in their physical fitness.
- All of the eligible graduates earned an award.

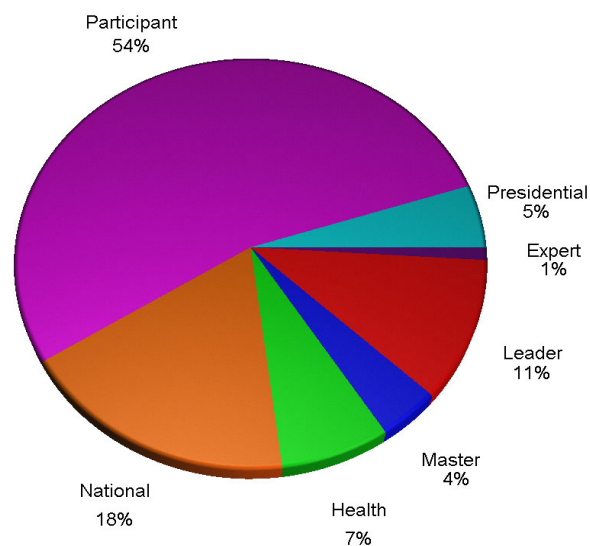


Figure 15. Physical Fitness Awards



# Job Skills

Goal: Learn basic work skills, resume writing, job interview techniques and career exploration.



## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will:

- Conduct career exploration;
- Participate in job shadowing;
- Practice skills required for obtaining and holding a job.
- Develop a resume



## Findings

- Programs administer surveys to Corpsmembers to help identify career interests.
- Corpsmembers practice resume writing, the job application process, and interview skills.
- Corpsmembers attend and participate in job fairs.
- Corpsmembers participate with local businesses that provide job-shadowing opportunities.



# Leadership/Followership

Goal: Learn positive leadership/followership responsibilities and roles within social groups.

## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will:

- Experience the moral and ethical dimensions of leadership.
- Rotate through leadership positions provided by the quasi-military model and student government structure.

## Findings

- Corpsmembers perform in an average of 3 leadership opportunities per class.
- Corpsmembers begin leadership rotation in week 3.
- Leadership responsibilities increase proportionally for Corpsmembers as they progress through the Residential Phase.





# Life Coping Skills

Goal: Learn personal financial management, teamwork skills, anger management, and drug and alcohol avoidance strategies.



## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will:

- Develop a Post-Residential Action plan.
- Demonstrate life-coping strategies.
- Demonstrate financial management skills.



## Findings

- 98% of Corpsmembers develop Post-Residential action plans prior to graduation from the Residential Phase.
- All Corpsmembers participate in classes on conflict resolution, anger management, time management and stress management.
- All Corpsmembers attend classes on financial management.
- Corpsmembers practice money management using their weekly living allowance as a tool.



# Responsible Citizenship

Goal: Understand civic responsibilities and the role of a positive citizen within the community.

## Performance Objectives

All Corpsmembers will demonstrate understanding of:

- Rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
- Election and voting process;
- The U.S. Constitution.

## Findings

- 100% of eligible 18 year olds register to vote.
- 100% of eligible males register for the Selective Service;
- Corpsmembers practice the democratic process through election of student government officers.



# CHAPTER 3: DISCUSSION

## Program Administration and Cost

The federal cost for ChalleNGe this reporting year is \$61,878,009. ChalleNGe is funded by both federal funds and state contributions. This year the maximum federal contribution is 65% of the total program budget and the state contribution is 35%. This ratio will stabilize in the next fiscal year with the states contributing 40% of the required budget. Nearly half of the states this year contributed more than the required 35% of the funding to insure their programs would be able to operate at maximum capacity and to meet the rising costs that the federal budget does not address. The state match for this reporting year is \$40,736,520.

Based on the annual target enrollment of 6,724 Corpsmembers, the per graduate cost was \$15,609. This equates to a \$9,412 federal expenditure and a \$6,197 state expenditure per graduate.

Only 8% of the annual budget is expended for facility use. This is one of the benefits of having 21 of the 27 programs located at a state owned National Guard training facility. Slightly more than 31% of the budget is directly related to health and welfare services for the Corpsmembers. Travel and transportation (3%) support both staff and Corpsmember movement. Figure 15 shows the average distribution of the major budget categories.

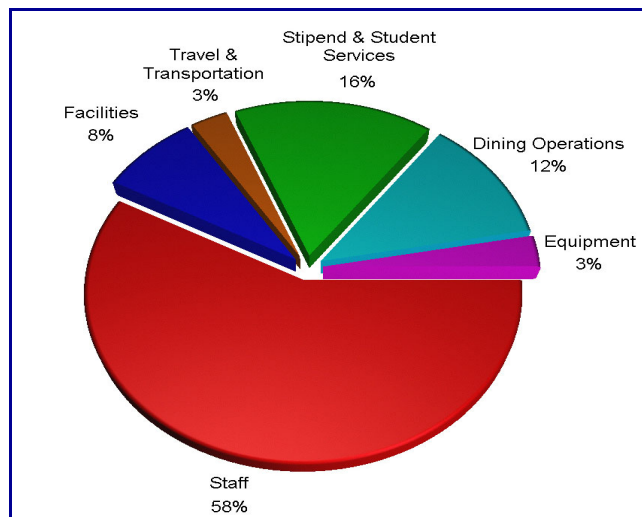


Figure 16. Budget Distribution





In assessing the cost benefit of ChalleNGe, total capital expenditure and operating costs are compared with those of other programs targeting a similar population. ChalleNGe programs incur minimal capital operating costs by using existing facilities and equipment to support the conduct of the program. Leveraging National Guard

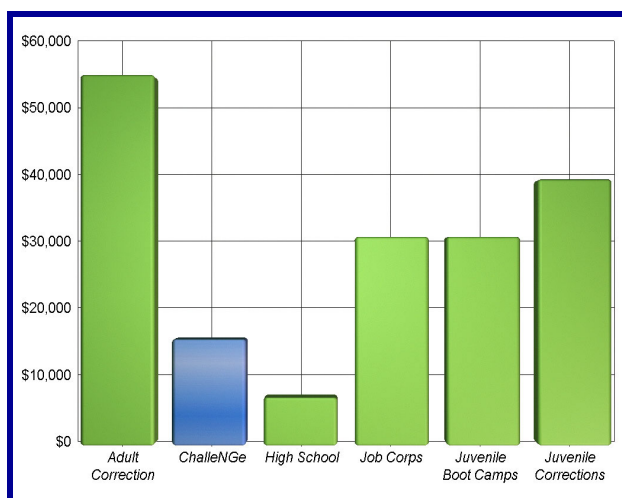


Figure 17. Cost Comparison

administrative and management infrastructure already in place minimize support costs required for operating the program. As shown in Figure 16, the ChalleNGe program is a cost effective alternative to Boot Camps and the correction system. It is also approximately 50% less costly per capita than Job Corps.

### Staff Turnover

Cadre turnover continues to be a concern. Directors have indicated they are unable to retain cadre more than 2-3 years. This retention problem could be due in part to salary limitations dictated by the current manning model and further hampered by the lack of program budget growth. With overall dollar amounts to fund each program remaining constant since the program's inception, the programs have not been able to provide incentives that would place them in a better position to retain their best cadre employees.

To meet the requirements of providing cost of living and merit increases for the staff, as well as to accommodate increasing operating costs, program directors have used funds for other than their originally budgeted purpose. For instance, graduate stipends are being reduced or simply eliminated altogether to fund other parts of the program. Due to the current budget limits and state-matching requirements, a combined federal and state remedy is needed to address this situation.



With turnover of personnel comes the need to train new employees. Most programs are using on-the-Job training as the primary means to provide new employees the knowledge, skills and abilities to work effectively with this at-risk youth population. In-service staff training is being conducted primarily during break periods between residential classes. This lack of formal or on-going training programs can significantly impact program quality due to the critical need for consistent application of standards. New employees often take 5-6 months (a full Residential Phase) to fully comprehend their role and understand the program model. This can be remedied with development of a formal orientation program for new personnel.

### Continuing Improvement Process

The ChalleNGe programs are continuing to show improvement in areas addressed in previous reports. The matching of Corpsmembers with screened and trained mentors improved by 8% to a 90% match rate by graduation from the Residential Phases.

National Guard Bureau modified the ChalleNGe manning model to authorize part-time Case Managers to support the Post-Residential phase. Some ChalleNGe Directors have been able to fill these positions and this has resulted in increased accountability, from 63% to 77%, of Corpsmember and mentor activities during the Post-Residential phases. Most Directors, however, are still seeking funds to support the positions.

Most programs are using on-the-Job training as the primary means to provide new employees the knowledge, skills and abilities to work effectively with ChalleNGe participants. In-service staff training is being conducted primarily during break periods between residential classes.

New programs are now beginning classes with fully automated LAN systems in place to accommodate the administrative and reporting requirements for ChalleNGe. Several existing programs have not established local area networks for the staff and/or computer resources centers. This lack of information technology support remains a barrier to overall program efficiency and effectiveness at those locations.

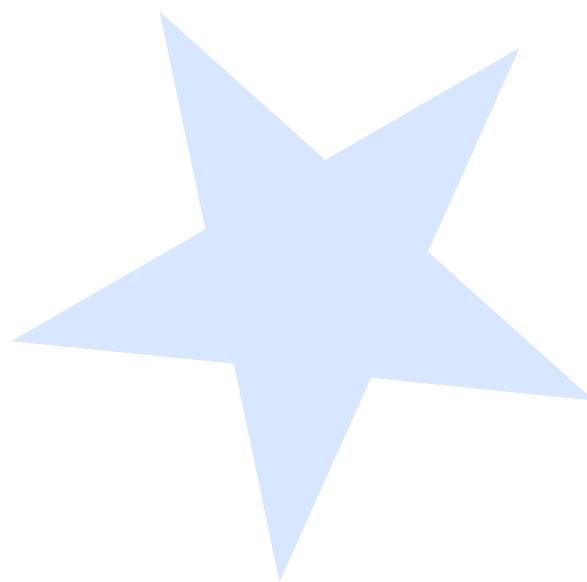
A standardized Post-Residential Action Plan is currently under development by NGB. The initial strategy planning session has produced the recommended design. This



is currently under consideration for use by all programs.

### New State Programs and Expansion of Existing State Programs

Two new states, Florida and New Mexico, started programs this year, and two states that currently have programs, Louisiana and South Carolina, will each add an additional site with classes due to start in January 2002. There are currently 15 states on the waiting list to begin ChalleNGe programs and 9 states that currently have programs have expressed the need for additional sites.



# Chapter 4: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conclusions

The National Guard ChalleNGe program is an intervention that takes an holistic approach to positive behavioral change in 16 -18 year old youth who have ceased to attend school. The primary goal of improving the life skills, education and employment potential of the youth who volunteer to attend ChalleNGe is being achieved.

Annual review and data analyses reveal program outcomes continue on a positive trend. Residential phase this year showed a 96% graduation rate; healthy academic growth which includes GED-passing rates higher than the national average; over \$2 million dollars worth of volunteer services provided to local communities; 100% improvement in physical fitness of the Corpsmembers; mentors being matched with 90% of the Corpsmembers prior to graduation from the Residential Phases; and positive placement at the conclusion of the 17 month program with 77% either in the military, working or continuing their education. The cost per graduate for these results was \$15,609, the lowest for programs that address the needs of a similar population.

Programmatically, defining of admissions criteria, reporting at the program sites and development of viable post-residential action plans are areas that need to be addressed by the National Guard Bureau with the Adjutants General. The Post-Residential mentoring component has not reached a level of staffing and resourcing where performance objectives results are consistent across all programs.

Cadre turnover remains an issue. Additional resources are needed to attract and retain cadre with the requisite training, experience and credentials to work effectively with at-risk youth. The professional development of new ChalleNGe staff members must also be addressed. Developing and conducting a comprehensive orientation program can remedy this problem.

The ChalleNGe program continues to be a successful community based program that leads, trains and mentors “at-risk” youth.



## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- National Guard Bureau should issue policy guidance to the states on juvenile status offenses to clarify this term and ensure compliance with admissions criteria.
- Directors should ensure resources are allocated to Post-Residential Phase operations to monitor graduate activity and provide mentor support.
- Directors should ensure Corpsmembers have developed comprehensive and achievable Post-Residential Action Plans.

In summary, the National Guard ChallengeNGe Program is one of the most successful programs of its type – leading, training and mentoring at-risk youth so that they may become productive citizens in America’s future.

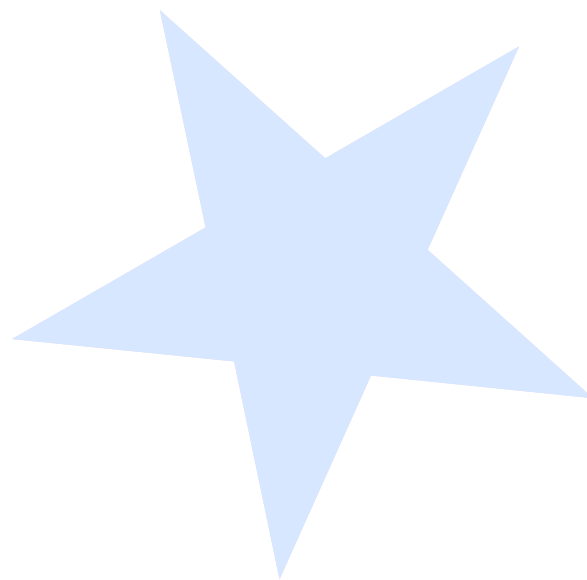
**A Better America – One Youth at a Time**



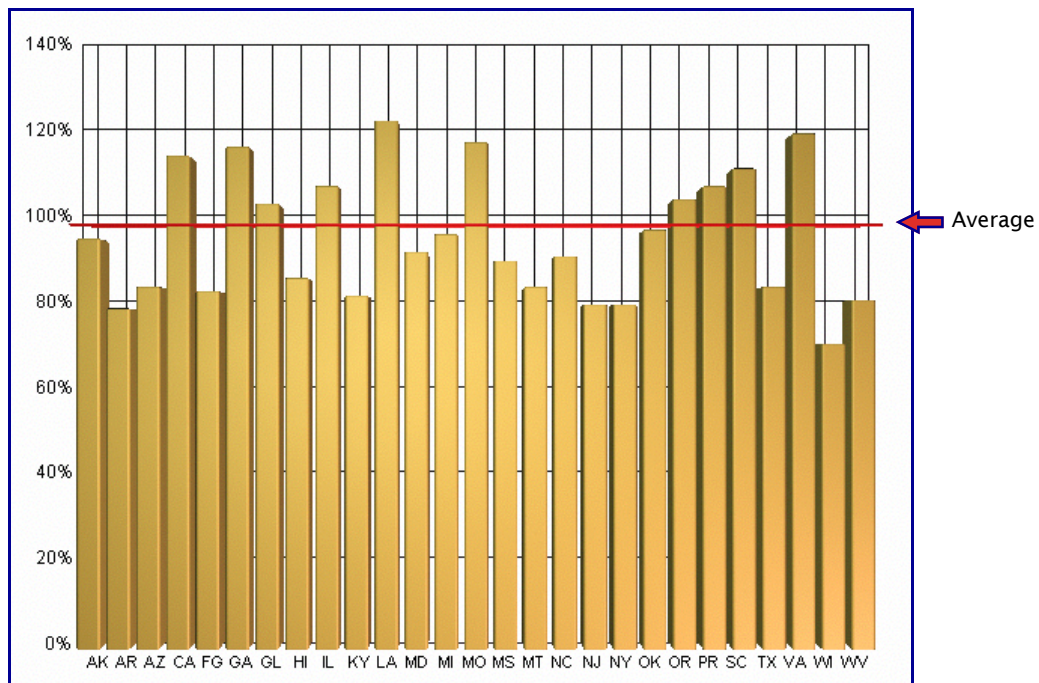




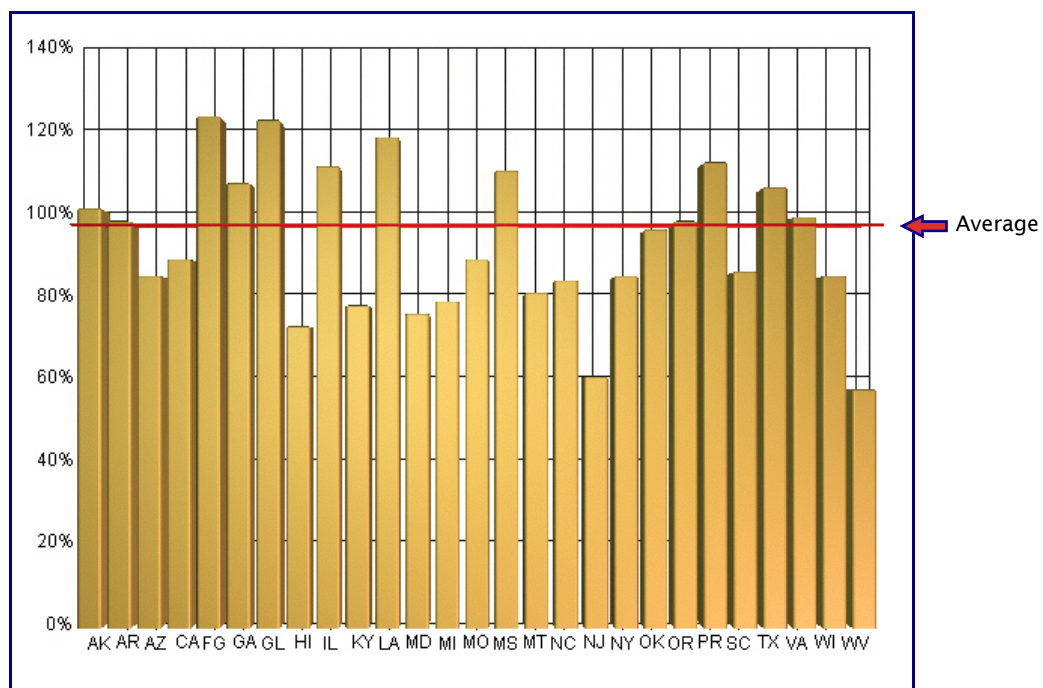
# Appendices



## Class Retention vs. Target Enrollment



Class 15

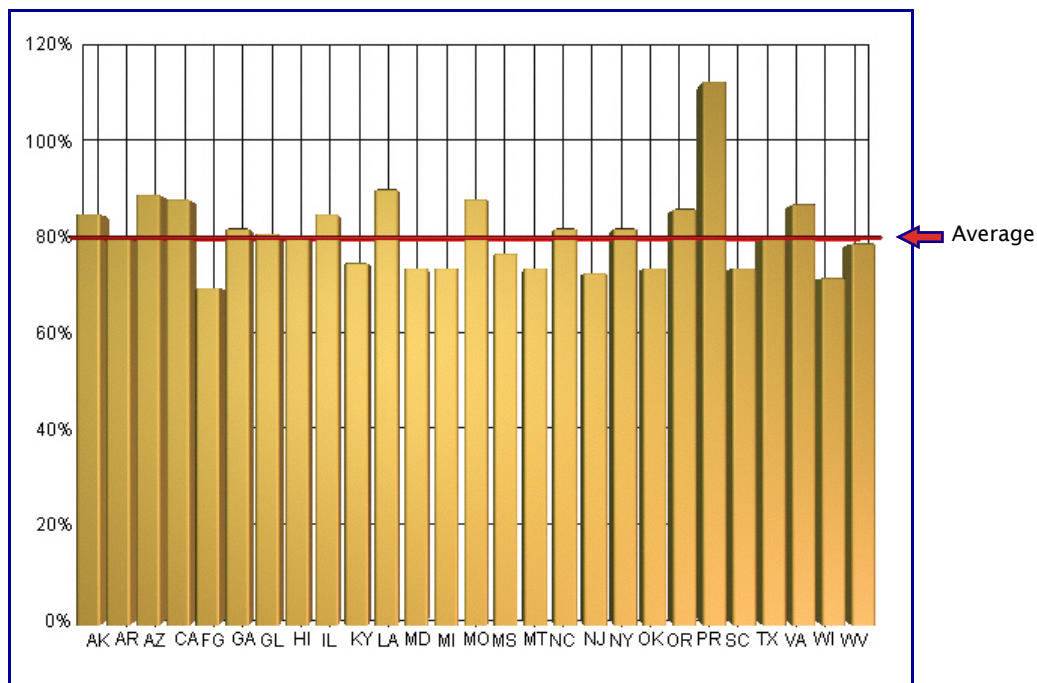


Class 16

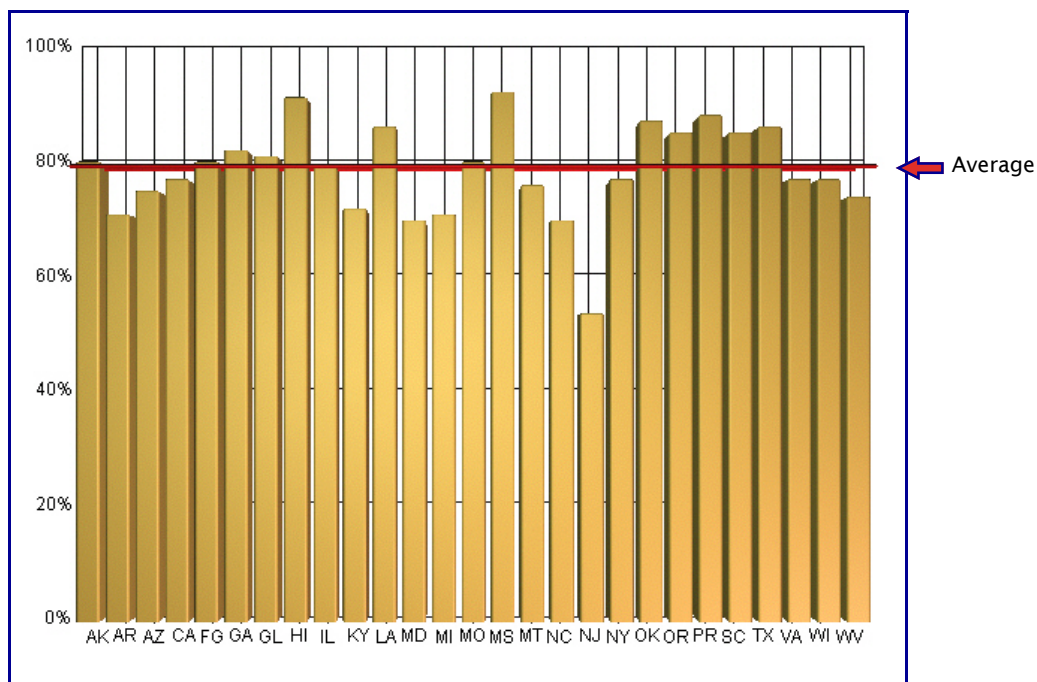




## Class Retention vs. Initial Enrollment



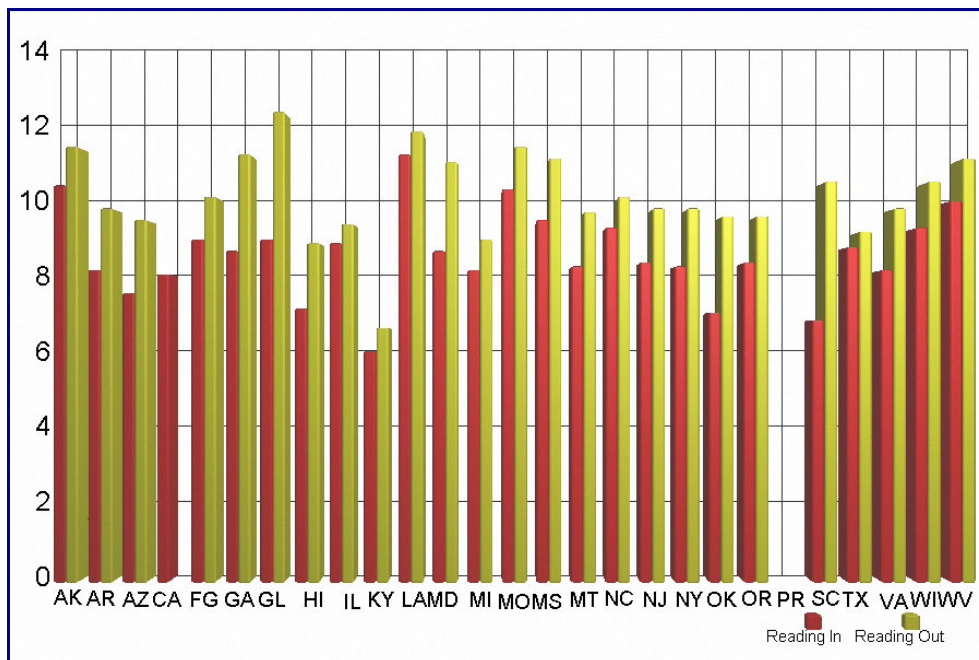
Class 15



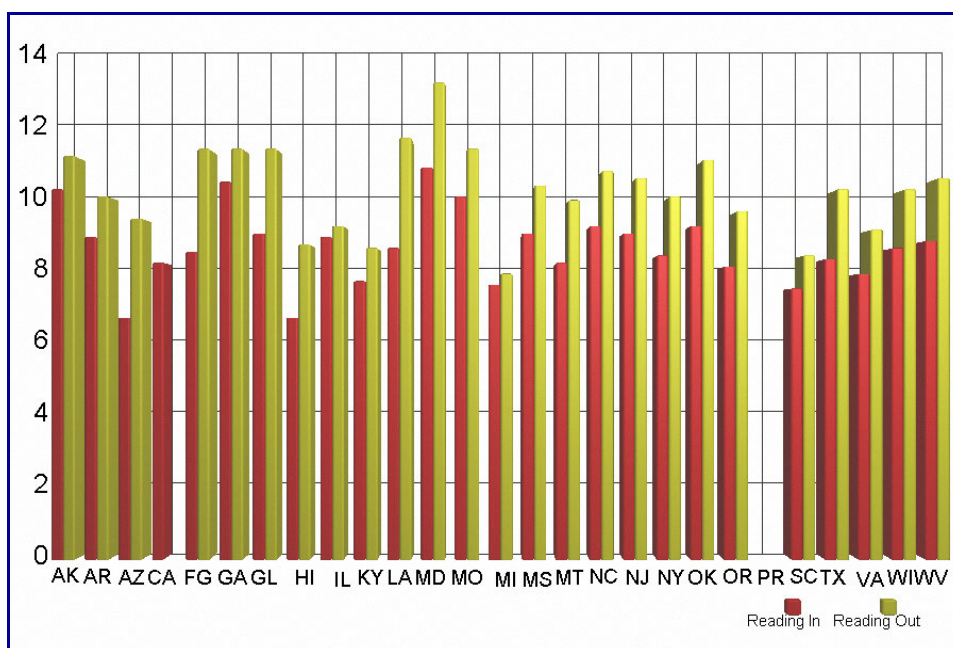
Class 16



## TABE Reading



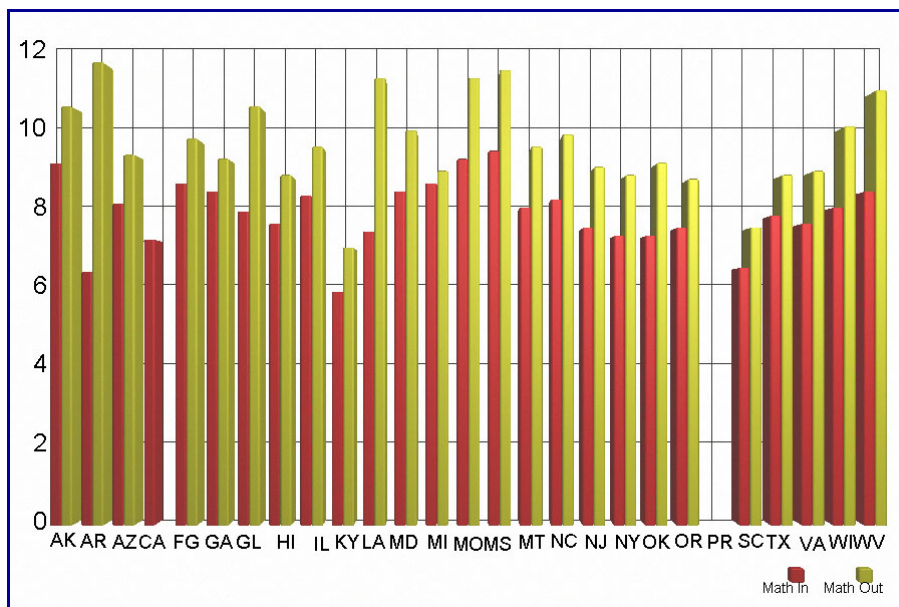
## Class 15



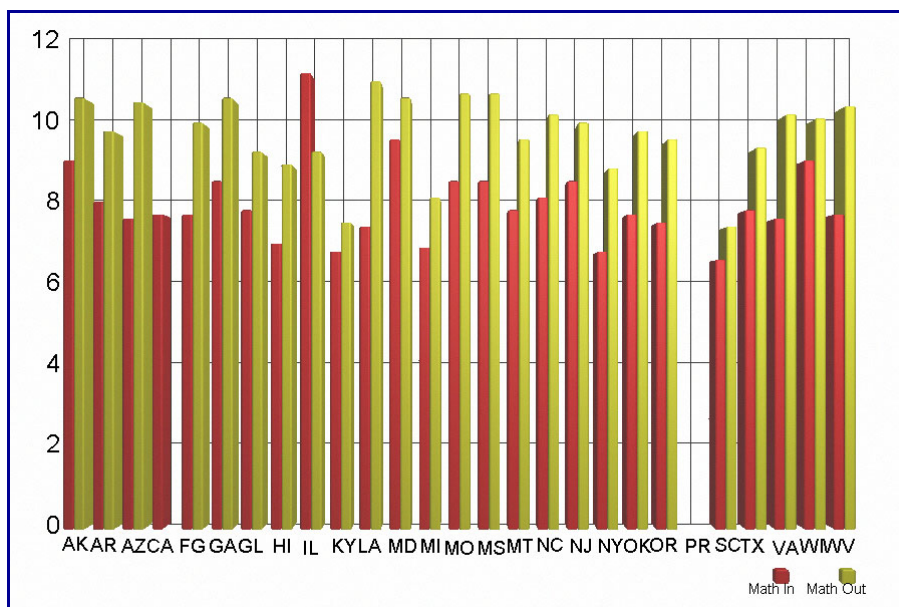
## Class 16



## TABE Math



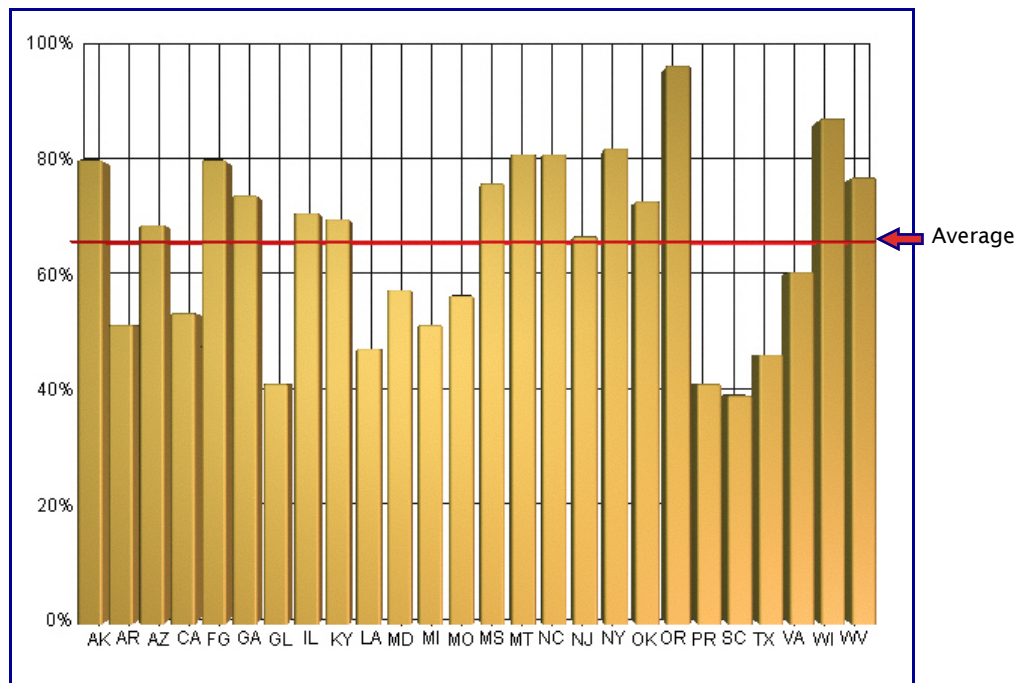
## Class 15



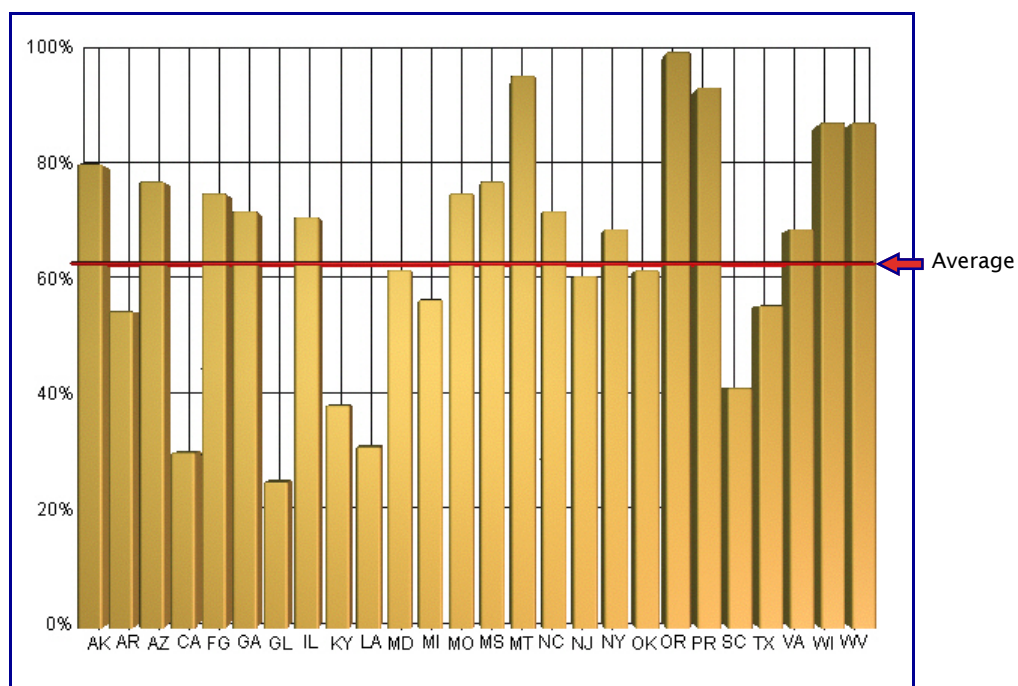
## Class 16



## GED Success Rate



Class 15

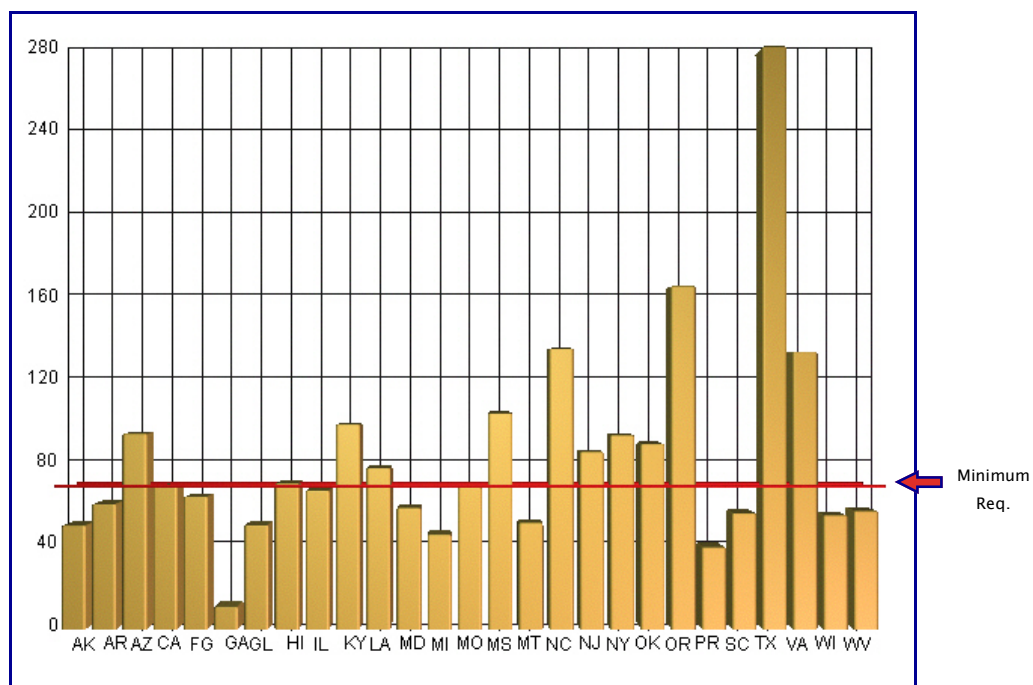


Class 16

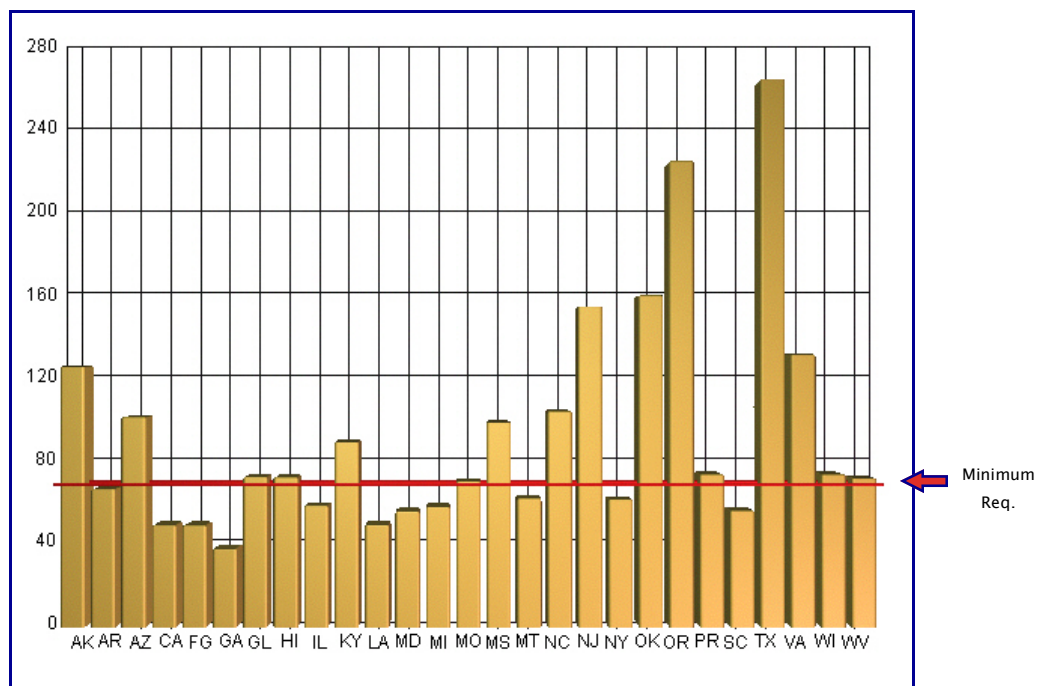




## Average Community Service Hours Performed



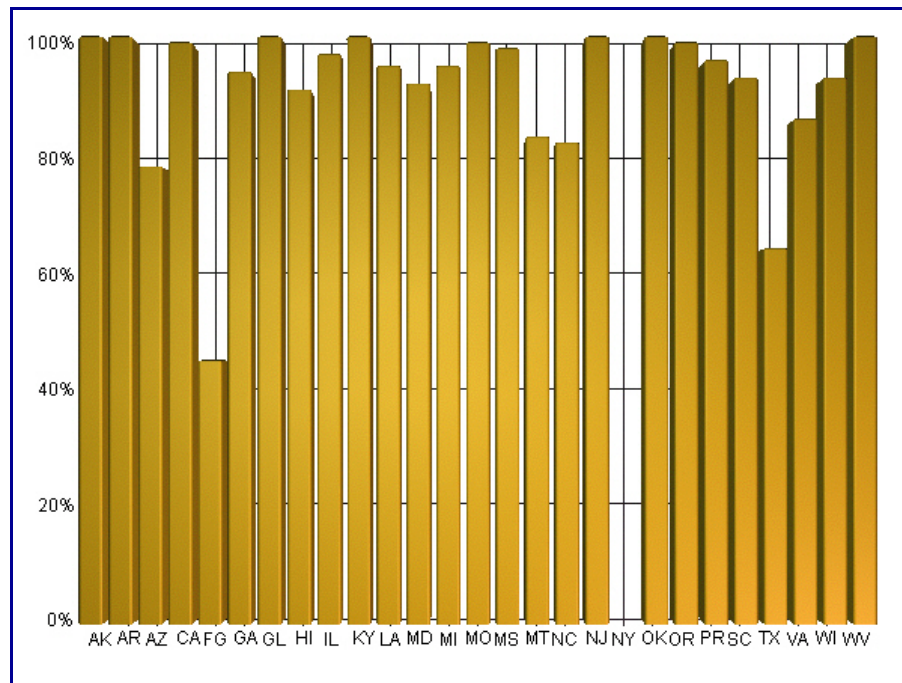
### Class 15



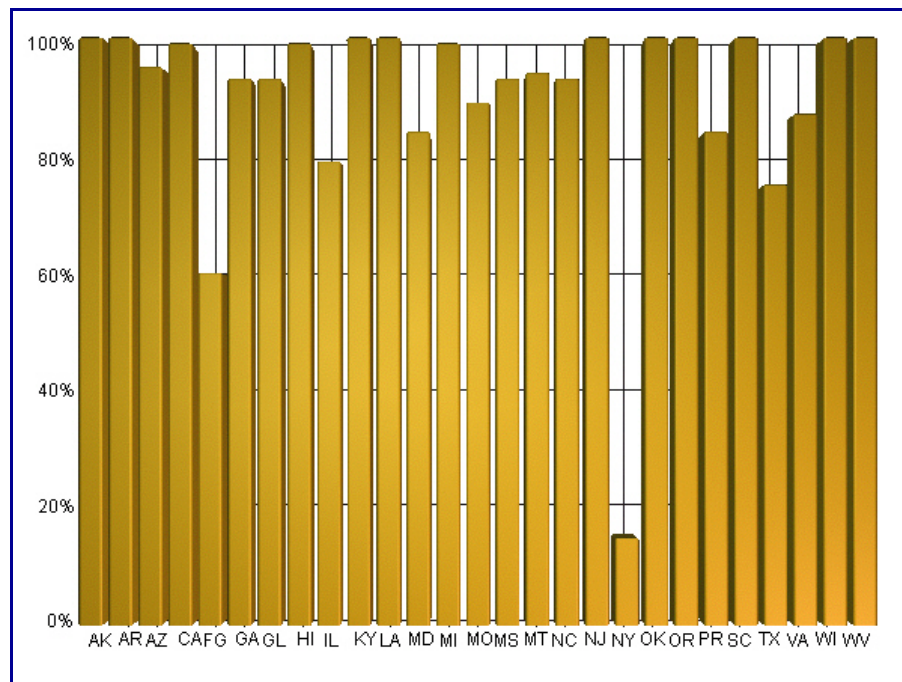
### Class 16



## Mentor Matches at Graduation



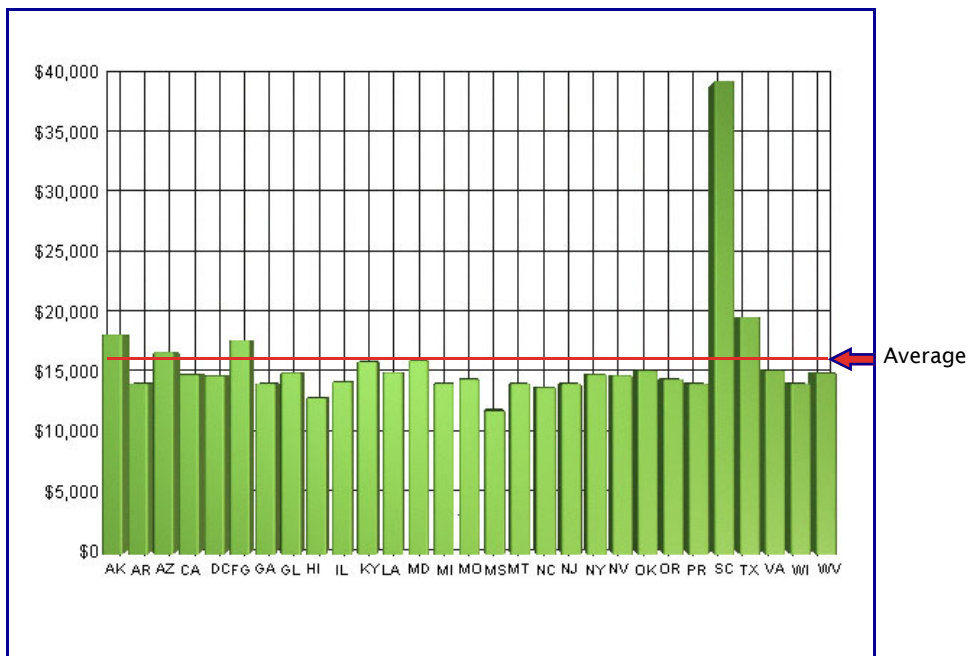
## Class 15



## Class 16

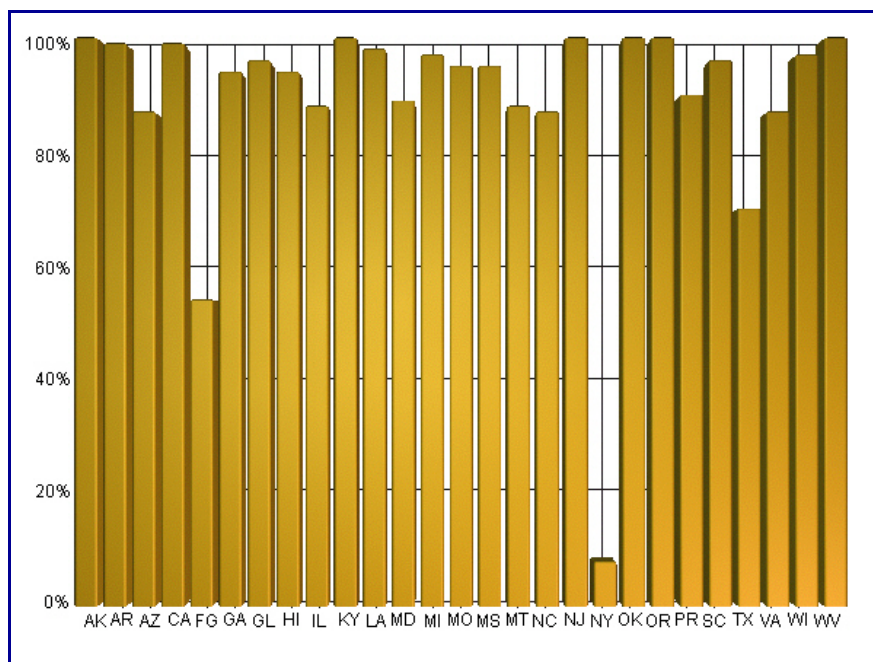


## Cost per Targeted Enrollment



Note The required state match for SC is \$980,000, however the state contributed \$5,932,030.

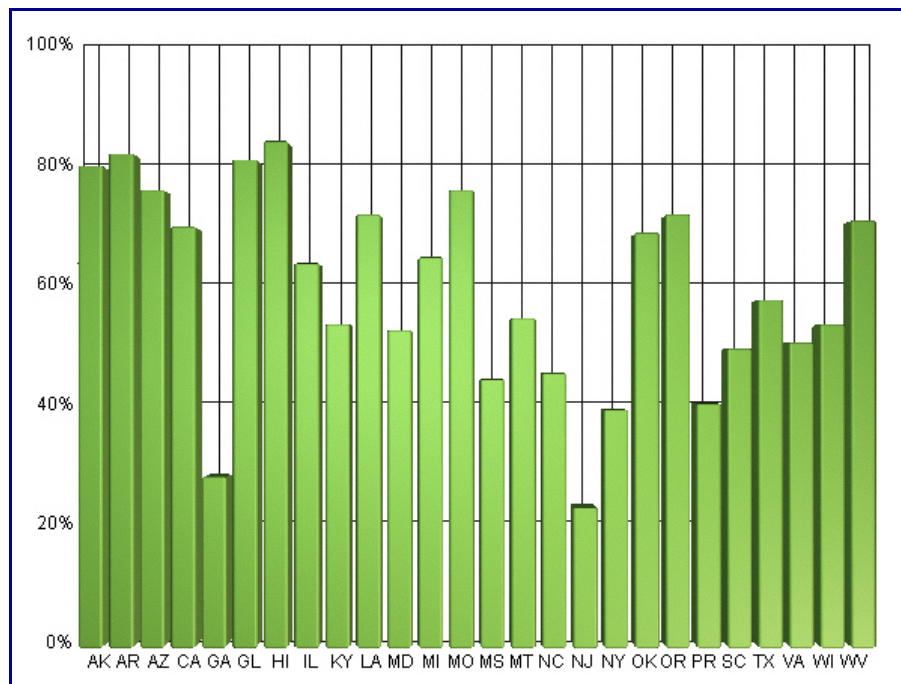
## Mentor Matches



## Classes 15 and 16

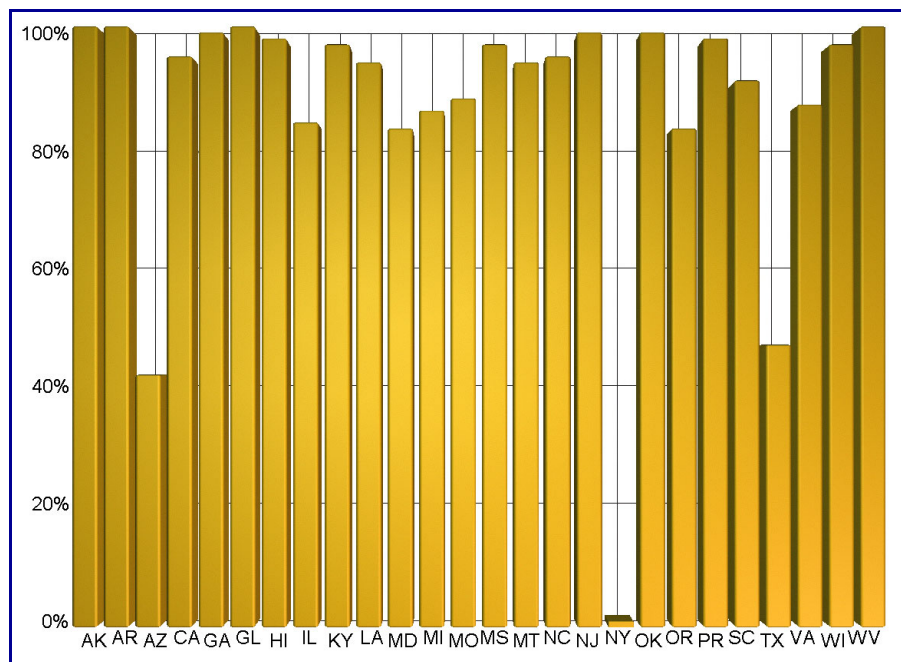


## Placements at Graduation



## Classes 15 and 16

## Mentor Matches at Completion



## Classes 13 and 14





STATE	Annual Target Enrollment	Annual Budget			COST PER CORPSMEMBER			Percent of Costs	
		Federal	State/Other	Totals	cost /cm	Fed Cost/CM	State/Other Cost/CM	% Fed	% State/Other
Alaska	200	\$2,310,000	\$1,297,000	\$3,607,000	18,035	\$11,550.00	\$6,485	64%	36%
Arkansas	200	\$1,820,000	\$980,000	\$2,800,000	14,000	\$9,100.00	\$4,900	65%	35%
Arizona	200	\$1,820,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,320,000	16,600	\$9,100.00	\$7,500	55%	45%
California	200	\$1,820,000	\$1,135,275	\$2,955,275	14,776	\$9,100.00	\$5,676	62%	38%
District of Columbia *	60	\$880,000	\$0	\$880,000	14,667	\$14,666.67	\$0	100%	0%
Georgia Fort Gordon	200	\$2,228,000	\$1,286,432	\$3,514,432	17,572	\$11,140.00	\$6,432	63%	37%
Georgia Fort Stewart	400	\$3,640,000	\$1,960,000	\$5,600,000	14,000	\$9,100.00	\$4,900	65%	35%
Hawaii	200	\$1,938,546	\$1,043,833	\$2,982,379	14,912	\$9,692.73	\$5,219	65%	35%
Illinois	800	\$6,695,000	\$3,605,000	\$10,300,000	12,875	\$8,368.75	\$4,506	65%	35%
Kentucky	200	\$1,844,050	\$992,950	\$2,837,000	14,185	\$9,220.25	\$4,965	65%	35%
Louisiana Camp Beauregard	350	\$3,298,000	\$2,237,829	\$5,535,829	15,817	\$9,422.86	\$6,394	60%	40%
Louisiana Gillis Long	200	\$1,876,550	\$1,110,000	\$2,986,550	14,933	\$9,382.75	\$5,550	63%	37%
Maryland	140	\$1,388,878	\$838,854	\$2,227,732	15,912	\$9,920.56	\$5,992	62%	38%
Michigan	200	\$1,820,000	\$980,000	\$2,800,000	14,000	\$9,100.00	\$4,900	65%	35%
Missouri	200	\$1,866,800	\$1,005,200	\$2,872,000	14,360	\$9,334.00	\$5,026	65%	35%
Mississippi	400	\$1,936,000	\$2,781,971	\$4,717,971	11,795	\$4,840.00	\$6,955	41%	59%
Montana	200	\$1,820,000	\$980,000	\$2,800,000	14,000	\$9,100.00	\$4,900	65%	35%
New Jersey	200	\$1,783,711	\$960,460	\$2,744,171	13,721	\$8,918.56	\$4,802	65%	35%
New York	200	\$1,820,000	\$980,000	\$2,800,000	14,000	\$9,100.00	\$4,900	65%	35%
North Carolina	200	\$1,922,000	\$1,035,000	\$2,957,000	14,785	\$9,610.00	\$5,175	65%	35%
Nevada**	24	\$218,400	\$134,104	\$352,504	14,688	\$9,100.00	\$5,588	62%	38%
Oklahoma	200	\$1,922,924	\$1,090,420	\$3,013,344	15,067	\$9,614.62	\$5,452	64%	36%
Oregon	200	\$1,868,750	\$1,006,250	\$2,875,000	14,375	\$9,343.75	\$5,031	65%	35%
Puerto Rico	200	\$1,820,000	\$980,000	\$2,800,000	14,000	\$9,100.00	\$4,900	65%	35%
South Carolina	200	\$1,820,000	\$5,932,030	\$7,752,030	38,760	\$9,100.00	\$29,660	23%	77%
Texas	200	\$2,120,000	\$1,771,600	\$3,891,600	19,458	\$10,600.00	\$8,858	54%	46%
Virginia	200	\$1,952,600	\$1,068,530	\$3,021,130	15,106	\$9,763.00	\$5,343	65%	35%
Wisconsin	200	\$1,820,000	\$983,700	\$2,803,700	14,019	\$9,100.00	\$4,919	65%	35%
West Virginia	200	\$1,920,000	\$1,060,082	\$2,980,082	14,900	\$9,600.00	\$5,300	64%	36%
National Guard Bureau		\$1,887,800		\$1,887,800					
Grand Total	6574	\$61,878,009	\$40,736,520	\$102,614,529	15,609	\$9,413	\$6,197	60%	40%

\*DC is not a ChalleNGe state. Youth from DC attend the MD ChalleNGe program.

\*\*NV is not a ChalleNGe state. Youth from NV attend the AZ ChalleNGe program.

The South Carolina ChalleNGe is co-located with a State funded alternative school that accounts for the additional expenses.





*Social Consultants International Inc.*